

WWD

VIOLA
MILLER'S
WEEKLY
WRAP UP

12/2/2005



YES, THERE ARE SOME HOLIDAY WISHES THAT WE CAN GRANT

COMMUNICATION KEY TO FINDING WAYS TO ARRANGE TRIAL VISITS

As the holidays are upon us, I've thought a lot about the wish lists I have received over the years. On several occasions, I have seen this particular wish on DCS kids' lists: "To be at home with my family for Christmas." So, in the spirit of the holidays, I found it fitting to address the following DCS Urban Legend:

A Trial Home Visit **MUST** be for 90 days. True or False? **FALSE!**

DCS policy 16.12, section D, addresses one way the court can give approval for a trial home visit to begin. However, there are

other ways the courts can give approval for the visit (or release the child from custody), and still comply with the law. But the key to all of this is one magic word: communication.

If a child is on a trial home visit and the family is doing well, why keep the child in custody? Ask yourself as the child's case manager, "Is it in the child's best interest to remain in custody?" If you think the answer might be No, consider the following:

At the time the trial home visit is approved, be proactive. Monitor closely how the family is doing. If things are smooth sailing and the family has services set up, talk with your attorney about filing a motion in court to release the child from custody.

Be sure to communicate with the providers who are in the home. They can be a great

resource for helping you to determine the length of a trial home visit.

Ask yourself, "What does my documentation show?" "Has the case been reviewed by all appropriate multiple disciplinary teams?" "Is it time for a review?"

Keep in mind, 90 is not a magic number. A trial home visit can be shortened or extended, there is no magic time. All families are different and they are best served when decisions made about the length of a visit is based on their strengths and needs.

Remember, communication is the key!

I hope each of you have a safe and wonderful holiday season.

– AMANDA LEWIS

The World Beyond



TAFT

Students at Taft Youth Development Center donated \$243.49 to the American Red Cross to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

This was a certainly a generous donation, due to the fact that the students have to buy their own snacks and any specialty hygiene items. Taft employees matched the donation to show the students how proud they were of their caring attitude.

– CAROLE MUSCARNERO

The Commissioner's To-Do List for the Year

Almost two years ago, right after my arrival at DCS, I wrote a series of articles for the WWU that articulated a vision for offering quality services for our families and children as well as supporting our staff and resource families. It's time for me to make that commitment again. I will plan to do 10 articles, this time every other week (One each week nearly killed me). The following are my tentative topics. Please let me know if you have other recommendations:

1. Focusing on the "T" in CFTM
2. Twelve and Twenty Four
3. Moving Beyond the Drive-By Visit
4. Being Strengths Based is Not as Easy as it Sounds
5. Community Partnerships – Don't leave home without them!
6. Taking the Long Term View
7. The Power of QSR
8. If It's Not Good Enough for your Own Child . . .
9. There is No Such Thing as Too Many Adults Loving a Child
10. Behavior is Communication – Some of Kids Speak Very Loudly

Now, if you don't like one of these or want to suggest an alternative, I'll be glad to hear from you.

Please have a wonderful, restful, blessed holiday season and enjoy your own family, even as you work to serve the families of others.

– VIOLA MILLER

A SHOUT-OUT TO JOHNSON CITY

Recently the entire SIU team has been busy speaking to various groups, such as classes, foster parents and contract agencies. And I'm writing the Weekly Wrap Up to recognize Robert Steuart as an especially excellent contributor.

Robert is a Johnson City-based case manager III assigned to the Special Investigations Unit and responsible for coverage in the Northeast Region.

In addition to his work as an investigator, he is also wonderful community liaison. In fact, Robert is frequently asked to speak as a representative for the Department, and he does so without hesitation.

Just recently, he was contacted by Sarah Dowtain an instructor at East Tennessee State University and asked to address a social work class on the subject of family violence. He explained the work of DCS and how the associated units – foster care, adoptions, juvenile justice and child protective services – work together for the child and family.

Robert explained the CPS/SIU investigative process, beginning with the referral process and going through the entire investigative process (child/CAC interviews, police involvement, removals, court action and reunification) before finishing up with community resources and the after-effects of an investigation. He provided a handout to the class.

Robert spent approximately two hours with the class, and, of course, the presentation was well received.

– KATHLEEN WALLACE

GET READY TO TAKE THE NEW TNKIDS FEATURES FOR A TEST DRIVE

OIS is deep into the development effort on the TNKIDS 0206 enhancements. Here's an update on the project's status and the key dates you need to know.

Documentation on all of the Business Requirements has been completed and approved by the identified stakeholders. Development of the Residential Resources component has been completely coded and is currently being tested by OIS staff.

Coding is currently underway on the Duplicate Social Security, Methamphetamine Tracking and the Child Placements Components. It is our goal to have all coding completed by Dec. 16.

After we complete the coding on the remaining components, OIS will finish their internal testing and be ready for User Acceptance Testing the weeks of Jan. 9 – 13 and Jan. 16 – 20. These are key dates where we will be asking for participation from across the state to help make sure the improvements are working as intended.

User Acceptance Testing is a crucial piece of this effort and will help ensure that OIS delivers a quality product in February. Want to help us? Please contact your local FSA to get your name on the testing list.

TNKIDS_0206 goes live on Feb. 20. It will provide a tremendous amount of functionality that we don't have now. And you should also be aware that this new functionality replaces the current FHACP application.

– MICHAEL A. PRICE SR.

FROM A THANKFUL TBI FRIEND

My name is Joe Copeland. I'm a Special Agent in Charge of Special Projects for the TBI Drug Division. The reason I'm writing this e-mail is to thank you for allowing Brooke Naus to come to the Fire Academy and teach a class to State and Local officers on how we in law enforcement can assist the DCS with methamphetamine children. I want to commend Brooke on her presentation. The officers and agents all had good comments on the information Brooke presented and the way it was given. Brooke taught the way Police like to be taught: short, simple and to the point. I hope with you give DCS permission to use Brooke again on other schools and classes I have to put together across the state for officers. Again thank you for allowing Brooke to assist the TBI in this school.

Thanks,
Joe

Can't We All Get Along? Why, Yes!

I am writing to share a good deed done by our contemporaries in the Cleveland office. We recently had a visitation flex case where the father of our child lived in Chattanooga, and the child came into custody through the Knox Region. Visitation in the father's home was not appropriate for many reasons, he had no transportation to come to Knox nor did he want to take off from work, and we had to come up with a mid-way solution to meet everyone's needs.

LeAnn Hayes and Fran Nelson from the Cleveland office were very generous and helpful in allowing us to use their office for these visits. When I called them, there were no questions, no hesitations, just a "can-do and let-us-help-you" attitude. The father actually had a construction job a few miles from this office and used his lunch break for visits.

I wanted to share a positive demonstration of teamwork between Regions. Thanks.

– AUDREY TOLAR

CORE LEADERSHIP

MINUTES

Audrey Corder Presiding
(and Eric Henderson transcribing)
November 1, 2005

Commissioner's Comments:

Commissioner will not approve more than two people for training and one person should be from the field. Staff needs to ask for scholarships, if they want to attend trainings.

The Commissioner will not approve any travel authorities (TA's) that are not submitted at least 30 days in advance. We need to get our spending under control.

Overtime Report

Joe Cimino presented a handout on the Overtime Report followed by discussion.

Joe stated we are wasting money and we cannot continue to do this. Joe stated we are projecting \$2.2 million over budget for overtime (budget of \$5.8 million) but should be \$4.4.5 million in overtime given rightsizing and vacancies.

Judy Cole stated that the regions would be doing another rightsizing using CPS, Juvenile Justice, probation, and custody numbers. East Region has shown progress in reducing overtime since July. Commissioner stated that we have to be careful that we do not send the message that we do not have overtime for direct services for children.

Joe Cimino will be looking at overtime for Central Office administration as well, because we serve as a role model for the regions.

Departmentwide Issues:

♣ Residential treatment

♣ Adoption (cost are greater in adoption than foster care)

♣ Overtime

We need to focus on increasing the IV-E penetration rate to 65%. We were at 33% and now we are at 55%. If we reduce length of stay by 6 days and reduce percent of children coming into custody by 6%, DCS would have \$13 million in savings. There is talk in Washington to turn this into capped entitlement and we would be fine if we were at maximum penetration rate of 65%. The Feds are suggesting that states develop reinvestment strategies. DCS has made the same

suggestions to our private providers (develop reinvestment strategies).

We need to look at cost shifting needs assessment dollars

We overspent in some areas but not in Needs Assessment dollars and we will not use this money to close out the fiscal year. The Commissioner stated she would not do this again.

We need a spending plan for Needs Assessment dollars. The regions may not have a clear understanding about needs assessment money and what to use it for or how to access it. Needs Assessment funds are to be used to move service programs forward and should be linked to the regional implementation plans. CFTM facilitators may not feel empowered to make decisions to use these funds.

Action Steps:

Needs Assessment money is in the DPA's and fiscal directors in regions need to be part of this process to advise regional management how to spend this money.

We should involve regional resource and health unit staff in how and when to access Needs Assessment funds to be more solution focused.

Action Step:

♣ This will be added to the RA conference call agenda for November 2, 2005.

♣ Joe will contact regional fiscal agents to ask them to ensure that every CFTM facilitator knows how to access Needs Assessment dollars and what is covered.

♣ Randal Lea and Elizabeth Black will put together a "Whatever It Takes Campaign" for example, articles in the weekly update.

♣ Lane Simpson will pull cases for the last 5 kids that came into custody within a region and the IST will review these with the region. Elizabeth will forward this message to IST. The pull of cases should also include JJ as well.

♣ Tom Riss will take the lead on how to use Fiscal teams and CSA case managers on sharing the knowledge of available services and how to access them.

♣ Follow-up on Needs Assessment issue within a combined meeting of Domain V and VII. The meeting has been scheduled for 11/16/05 from 12:30 to 1:30 in 7A.

Quality casework – regions picking certain counties to focus on and partner with fiscal representation

Performance-based Contracting

A meeting was held on October 31 with Chapin Hall, private providers and regions regarding performance based contracting.

Action Steps

♣ Bonnie Hommrich will send out the 2 articles on reinvestment philosophy to CLT members.

♣ Performance based contracting will be on the next CLT agenda for 30 minutes.

TBI Meeting

Debra Valentine will meet with TBI to develop a proposal for another fingerprinting vendor. Identix continues to be problematic.

QSR UPDATE

The Southwest Region QSR review was completed last week. Scheduling with JJ facilities will have to be planned more carefully, due to conflict with YDC treatment team meetings. We will have names of cases to review 8 weeks in advance to send to superintendents of YDC's in advance for any child who has been in a YDC at any point in their out of home care. The QSR is having an impact on JJ staff as well as the D/N staff. We would want to invite the YDC superintendents, YDC treatment directors, and the YDC group home directors to the QSR exit conference session.

Upper Cumberland QSR review has shadow availability for the week of November 14.

CLT Announcements

Shalonda Cawthon is the new Executive Director of Child Safety.

Daryl Hilliard will be the new psychologist in the Southwest Region.